

Rogers Locomotive and  
Machine Works  
Spruce and Market Streets  
Paterson, New Jersey  
Passaic County

HAER No. NJ-3

HAER  
NJ,  
R. PAT.  
20-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
ROGERS LOCOMOTIVE AND MACHINE WORKS

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Date: 1831, 1853, 1879

Location: Spruce and Market Streets  
Paterson, New Jersey

Designed by: Unknown

Owner: Various

Significance: Several of the buildings in the complex forming the Rogers Locomotive and Machine works were originally constructed in the 1830's for the manufacture of textiles and textile machinery, and of paper. In the period from 1854-1866, properties on the upper raceway were acquired by Rogers for expansion in order to meet the increasing demand for steam locomotives and other heavy equipment. The development of this factory complex reflects the growth of increasingly heavy manufacturing in the Paterson area as the nineteenth century progressed.

Transmitted by: Monica E. Hawley, Historian, 1983

The Rogers Locomotive and Machine Works is situated on what was, originally, four mill lots (No. 4, 5, 6, and 7 by the S.U.M. survey). These lots were first developed in the 1830s after completion of the upper raceway in 1829.

The first building, known as the Jefferson Mill, was built on lot 4 in 1831. It was originally designed to be a combination of a textile machinery plant and spinning mill, but demand for machinery made use of the entire premises for that purpose more profitable.

For many years, the factory manufactured only textile machinery though there was capacity for an estimated 5,000 cotton spindles in addition to the machine works (Fisher's Paterson Census, 1832). Rogers Locomotive bought the leases on lot #4 in 1859 by which time some spinning was being done in the Jefferson Mill, about 3400 spindles being in place. Rogers had assumed the lease in 1854, and had constructed some buildings for the construction of locomotives. In 1859 they bought the lease, and assumed title to the mill, and there were, at that time, some 70 people employed turning 6,000 pounds of cotton a week into yarn. At the same time, lot #5 immediately to the east was leased, and a blacksmith shop and extension of the Jefferson Mill constructed. This was the first development on Lot #5.

Lots #6 and #7 had a stone factory built on them by the S.U.M. in 1836 for use by a Mr. Maitland as a bleaching and printing shop for cotton textiles. Maitland, however never occupied the site, and in 1837 the property was leased instead by Henry V. Butler, who established a large paper manufacturing plant in the factory. After the lease expired, in 1858, Butler moved his plant to the new premises he had constructed on lots 1, 2, and 3 of the upper tier. In 1864 the lot and building were purchased by Rogers Locomotive and Machine Works (whether or not they had occupied the site in the intervening years is unknown).

By 1866, Rogers Locomotive and Machine Works occupied four mill lots on the upper tier of the canal system and was the largest locomotive plant, if not the largest company, in the Paterson area.

The blacksmithing shop, machine shop (which occupied the Jefferson Mill building), the engine frame shop and an office filled the lots (#4 and #5) to the west of Spruce Street, while the millwrights shop (formerly the Passaic Paper mill, perhaps) occupied the east side. This structure burned down in 1879, and was rebuilt in its former shape the same year. The building measured 189 feet by 135 feet with two projecting wings - one twenty-five feet wide, and the other thirty-four feet wide. A newspaper account of the time states that the destroyed building had been built only six of eight years earlier, diminishing the possibility that the Paper Mill had been converted into the millwrights shop (Paterson Daily Press, 14 February 1879).

A corporate descendant of the Rogers Locomotive and Machine Works was purchased by the American Locomotive Works in 1910, but the firm was forced to sell off the properties in 1919 and 1926, and cease operations.

Material for this brief history was taken from the public records of Passaic and Essex Counties, and other contemporary sources.